OMRI DAILY DIGEST
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LITHUANIAN PRESIDENT'S STATE OF NATION SPEECH. In his hour-long annual address to the parliament on 21 February, Lithuanian President Algirdas Brazauskas noted that Lithuania's Gross Domestic Product increased in 1994, the first time that had occurred in five years, RFE/RL's Lithuanian Service reported. He added that inflation was less than 5% of what it was in 1992, and said that trade with the West was greater than with the CIS, although Russia remained Lithuania's main trading partner. Brazauskas said exports must be increased to diminish the existing foreign trade deficit. Implementation of laws and resolutions was the weakest part of the government, he noted. Speaking on foreign policy strategy, he said that the primary focus will be greater integration into European political, economic, and defense systems. -- Saulius Girnius, OMRI, Inc.

ESTONIA PASSES LANGUAGE LAW. By a 35-1 vote (with two abstentions) the Estonian parliament on 21 February passed a new language law, based on similar legislation in 1934, BNS reported. The law will go into effect on 1 April, replacing a 1989 law that State Law Commission Chairman Mart Nutt described as "a law of the Estonian SSR that was not fit for an independent country." The law defines Estonian as the official language and requires its use by the Estonian armed forces. In areas where an ethnic minority comprise the majority of the residents, its language can be used as an internal administration language in local government bodies. -- Saulius Girnius, OMRI, Inc.

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ESTONIA TO BECOME EU ASSOCIATE MEMBER WITHOUT TRANSITION PERIOD. Estonian Foreign Ministry Deputy Chancellor Priit Kolbre, the leader of his country's 17-member delegation for talks with the European Union in Brussels, said that Estonia would sign its association agreement with the EU without a transition period, BNS reported on 22 February. Estonia was also the only East European country to sign a free-trade agreement with the EU without a transition period. Estonian ambassador to Brussels Clyde Kull noted that by accepting such terms the EU recognized that Estonia's transition to a market economy is working. The associate membership agreement is expected to be initialed in March, signed by the end of June at the latest, and would go into effect after ratification by the Estonian and European parliaments. -- Saulius Girnius, OMRI, Inc.

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN ESTONIAN PRE-ELECTION POLL. Eesti Sonumid published on 20 February the results of a telephone poll on the 5 March Estonian parliament elections, BNS reported. The poll was conducted on 14-15 February by the EMOR agency. The leading party, with 17% of the votes, was the Reform Party led by Bank of Estonia President Siim Kallas. The Center Party was second with 9%, followed by the Coalition Party and Rural Union (CPRU) electoral alliance with 8%, the Pro Patria and National Independence Party union with 6%, and Moderates and Rightists with 3%. An EMOR poll in late January had placed the Reform Party in fourth position with 9.4% behind the CPRU (28%), Moderates (13.6%), and the Center Party (11.6%). (OMRI Daily Digest, 7 February 1995). -- Saulius Girnius, OMRI, Inc.